

Views from the vulnerable: Understanding climatic and other stressors in the Sahel

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Abstract:

In much of sub-Saharan Africa, considerable research exists on the impacts of climate change on social-ecological systems. Recent adaptation studies emphasize sectoral vulnerability and largely physical adaptation strategies that mirror anti-desertification plans. The adaptive role of subsistence farmers, the vulnerable 'target' population, is largely overlooked. This article aims to fill this gap by putting the views from the vulnerable in the center of the analysis. Drawing from participatory risk ranking and scoring among smallholders in central Senegal, data on multiple hazards indicate that farmers' adaptive capacity to climate change is undermined by poor health, rural unemployment, and inadequate village infrastructure. Results from conceptual mapping reveal incomplete understanding of causes and consequences of climate change. Yet, shared knowledge and lessons learned from previous climatic stresses provide vital entry points for social learning and enhanced adaptive capacity to both wetter and drier periods now and in the future. (C) 2006 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

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Resource Description

Communication: M

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience: M

audience to whom the resource is directed

Public

Exposure: M

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event, Food/Water Security, Food/Water Security, Human Conflict/Displacement, Precipitation, Temperature

Extreme Weather Event: Drought, Flooding

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Food/Water Security: Agricultural Productivity, Food Access/Distribution, Livestock Productivity

Temperature: Fluctuations

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Rural

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Africa

African Region/Country: African Country

Other African Country: Senegal

Health Impact: M

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Cardiovascular Effect, Developmental Effect, Infectious Disease

Cardiovascular Effect: Other Cardiovascular Effect

Cardiovascular Disease (other): Hypertension

Developmental Effect: Reproductive

Infectious Disease: Foodborne/Waterborne Disease, Vectorborne Disease

Foodborne/Waterborne Disease: Cholera, Other Diarrheal Disease

Vectorborne Disease: Mosquito-borne Disease

Mosquito-borne Disease: Malaria

Mitigation/Adaptation: **№**

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern: M

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Low Socioeconomic Status, Workers

Other Vulnerable Population: People with low access to education

Resource Type: M

format or standard characteristic of resource

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Research Article

Resilience: M

capacity of an individual, community, or institution to dynamically and effectively respond or adapt to shifting climate impact circumstances while continuing to function

A focus of content

Timescale: M

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment: №

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content